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Chair's Blog June 2025

Hello everyone and welcome to our June newsletter. This month we have an urgent plea for help, so please, I urge you to take a moment to read through to the end.

If you've been keeping up with our recent emails then you'll know that we've had quite a bit of change on the management front recently and we are now actively recruiting from within our own u3a membership for volunteers who can help us out and fill the vacant posts & essential roles as Trustees on the Management Committee.

In case you haven't got round to seeing my email asking for help then I'll try to summarise the issue here. We are now down to just 5 members on the Management Committee. As mandated by the Third Age Trust board all members of the Management Committee are automatically trustees of the charity, they also mandate there must be a minimum of 5 trustees in order to run our charity organisation. In better times we've had the luxury of up to 11.

A couple of weeks ago I had to call an extraordinary emergency Management Committee meeting to review our position and decide if we were still a viable organisation going forward, if we lose another trustee then policy dictates that we need to start to take measures to close the charity down. I'm not exaggerating the point here, just being open and transparent with you all regarding the serious nature of our current position.

We are looking for your help filling the following vacant roles as trustees on the Management Committee:

- Vice Chair
- Membership Liaison
- Events Officer
- Publicity Lead

Swindon u3a is one of the largest u3a's in the country with over 1700 members and 130+ active group activities. The management effort and work required to run our organisation is not to be underestimated, currently all that work is done by the 5 remaining trustees, and this can sometimes be overwhelming when other daily commitments and pressures are taken into account.

To be an effective Management Committee it is vital that we have the right number of people in the team with a good spread of skills. We desperately need new volunteers to step forward to help us with the management load to ensure Swindon u3a can continue and operate into the future.

In addition to the trustee Management Committee roles we also have about 35 other regular volunteers that are essential to help us run the organisation. We are always looking for willing volunteers to help us out in these areas too. Currently we have

volunteer vacancies on the Finance Team and within the Office team. One of our most recent volunteer recruits has been Lynda our new Newsletter Co-ordinator, she started her new role this month within the Publicity Team under the excellent leadership of Gill Brain and this is her first newsletter for us. I'd like to say a big thanks to Lynda for stepping in at short notice and volunteering to help us.

Please take a minute to consider this urgent request and let us know if you think you can help. You can contact me, or any member of the Management committee team.

Thanks.

Vince Williams

chair@swindonu3a.org.uk

committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

Current Vacancies

Current Management committee vacancies include:

- Vice Chair
- Membership Liaison
- Publicity Lead
- Events Lead

There are also vacancies for volunteers within the Finance and Office Teams.

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in these roles, send an expression of interest as soon as possible to committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

NB: There is a short Induction and mentoring process for new Trustees

Monthly Meetings



In May, John Kinory entertained us with a talk about his life and times as a film extra. Now known as supporting artists (SA's), these people are usually in the background, are not in the script, but their characters help advance the plot.

John featured as a prisoner in the final scenes of Paddington 2, wearing one of the pink prison outfits which had to be made to measure for each of the 300 SA's. And yes, they were fed marmalade sandwiches!

The daily process is usually 6.00 am arrival, into hair and make-up, sent to have breakfast, sit around for 2 hours or so and then hope to be called for action. Three days of filming with someone might eventually end up as a couple of minutes on screen. It is unusual to ever meet the Director as it is the Assistant Director who runs the show on the day. The Producer is rarely there.

John has appeared in Mama Mia 2 in the crowd at the airport arrivals terminal and in the Midsomer Murders episode 'Last Man Out'. He explained how costs can soar depending on what needs to be made, e.g. using gold leaf on the boards of the former captains at the fictitious golf club to ensure it looked authentic.

Due to his appearance, John is frequently cast as an academic wearing a gown and often in 'back of the head' shots, spending hours walking up and down Oxford streets. Or sometimes as a cleric – his highest rank achieved to date is as a Bishop in The Crown, walking past the two young princes, while taking care not to trip over his robes.

He has featured in period dramas, been turned into a werewolf, been 'murdered' in a reconstruction of a true story, been a care home resident in Silent Witness, and appeared in numerous TV commercials and promotions.

John described the whole process as being treated like royalty, you learn how the whole production is put together, you may meet the stars, you might get a free haircut, you get fed, you get paid, but above all it is fun!

Upcoming events

Summer Party

Monday June 9 at Ellendune Community Centre 2.00pm



It's our annual Summer Party! Games, Summer Quiz, Wall Trail, Music from our own Ukelele Group – and of course, tea and cake. See you there!

Don't be disappointed, book early, it's easy (details below).

Please note, there will be no Monthly meetings during July and August.

Book now for September – the start of the 2025/26 academic year:

David Bailey - 'Good Hare Day'

Monday 8 September, 2.00 pm at Ellendune Community Centre

Multi award-winning wildlife photographer David Bailey will be making a return visit, this time with his 'Good Hare Day' presentation.

Recognised as one of the UK's foremost brown hare photographers, David will weave a captivating narrative through his stunning imagery. His intimate connection with these remarkable creatures is evident in every shot, showcasing their elegance and playful nature in the wild. Prepare to be mesmerised!

Book your place

As always, please be sure to book a place by:

1. Visiting the website www.swindonu3a.org.uk (login, click on Swindon u3a events, then select the event)

or

2. Telephoning the office on 01793 614629

Bookings can be taken up to 11.30 am on the morning of the meeting.

Group News

U3a Bridge Group



Have you ever played this fascinating game? Our Bridge Group has been going for nearly 2 years now and we have fun every week learning and playing this challenging game. More than anything it's good exercise for the brain and keeps us thinking and remembering and planning – all activities which are good for us particularly as we get older.

Some of our members have only been learning the game since last September, others have been with us since we started and there are some 'old hands' who have played in the past and are brushing up their bridge techniques.

We have a few places left so if you'd like to give it a go get in touch with the Group Organiser (madelinegillianbrain@yahoo.com). We meet on Tuesday afternoons 2.00pm till 4.00pm at the Gorse Hill community Centre.

Cine Seniors



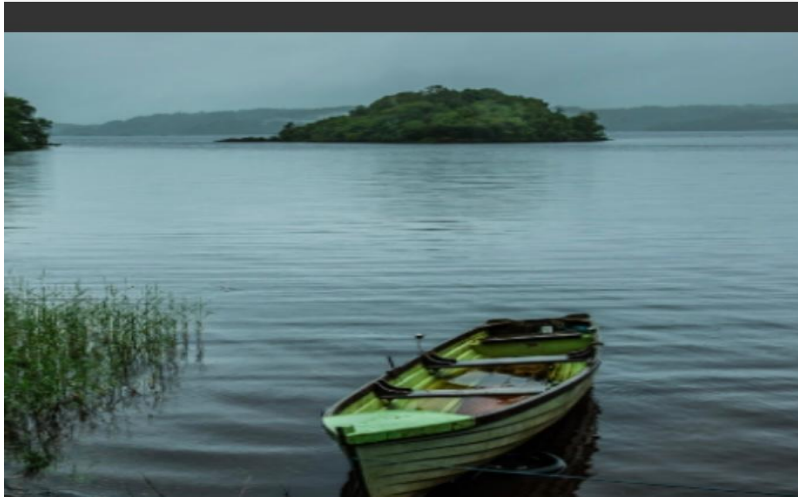
Sometimes there is nothing like seeing a film on the big screen. Cineworld at Shaw Ridge show regular films for 'Seniors' on Wednesday mornings. Tickets are only £4.50, free tea and coffee is available just before hand in the foyer Performances begin at about 11.30am.

Here's what's coming over the next couple of months:

- 4th June Bridget Jones : Mad About The Boy
- 11th June Black Bag
- 18th June The Alto Knights
- 25th June The Amateur
- 2nd July Monty Python and The Holy Grail
- 9th July Pride and Prejudice
- 16th July The Penguin Lessons
- 23rd July Drop

Life in a poem

In this modern world of constant noise, confusion, disagreement and unpleasantness, how wonderful to dream of a place of quiet retreat.



The Lake at Innisfree

By William Butler Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Swindon u3a Contacts

Chair	Vince Williams	chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair		
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All committee members		committee@swindonu3a.org.uk

Office

Swindon u3a Office, Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA
(*entry is by the middle door on the right-hand side of the building*)

Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 am until 12 noon

Telephone: 01793 614629 (Answerphone operates when the office is closed)

Email: office@swindonu3a.org.uk

Web: www.swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a Charity Number 298853

A reminder: We would love to hear from you. Share your news and photos from your groups.

Send submissions to: newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk - deadline for the July newsletter is **Monday 23 June**.